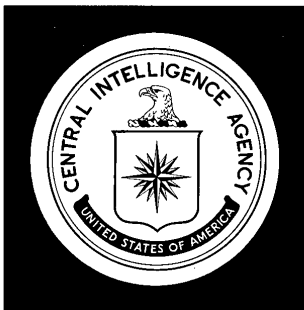




The President's Daily Brief

4 July 1972

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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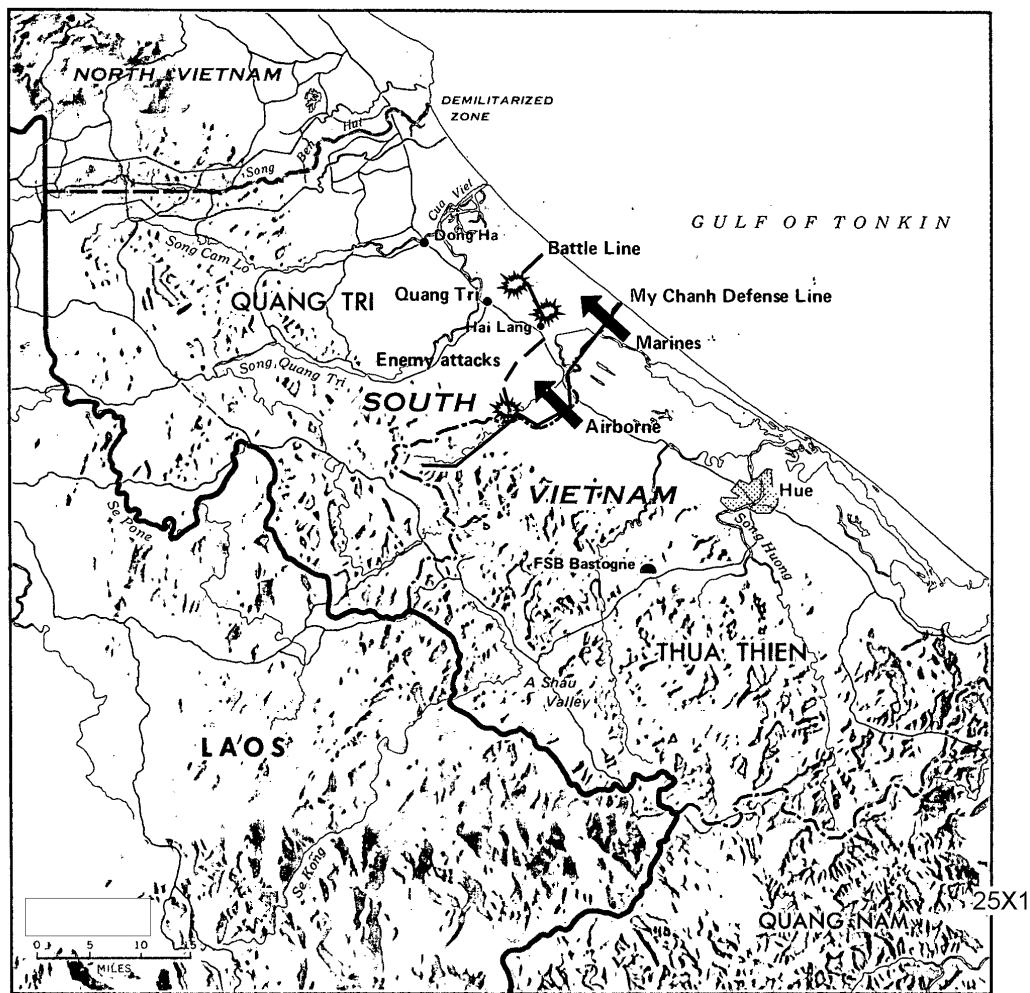
PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

The South Vietnamese drive in Quang Tri Province is meeting stiffer enemy resistance. Meanwhile, Communist shelling of Hue continues. (Page 1)

Sudanese President Numayri is considering normalizing relations with the US. (Page 2)

Peking's muted observance of another major holiday is further evidence of continuing political tension within the top leadership. (Page 3)

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VIETNAM

The government drive in Quang Tri Province is meeting stiffer resistance from Communist forces. The enemy directed two tank-supported infantry attacks against South Vietnamese Marines located about five miles east of Quang Tri City. This was followed by a clash near the district town of Hai Lang. The marines reported destroying seven of the tanks and capturing one, a Soviet-built T-54 medium tank.

Airborne units west of Route 1, which have had a more difficult time throughout the offensive, beat off a ground attack supported by tanks about three miles north of the My Chanh defense line. The airborne troops that were airlifted ahead of the main task force are now reported to be about two miles southwest of Quang Tri City and in contact with the enemy. The Communists also launched mortar and infantry attacks against South Vietnamese troops who have taken up defensive positions along the My Chanh line behind the airborne troops.

According to intercepted enemy communications, the Communists have been conducting extensive reconnaissance missions against the South Vietnamese forces and are continuing to make plans to counter the advance. One element of the North Vietnamese 38th Artillery Regiment reported it was preparing to attack government forces and was determined to hold the "liberated area." Other messages indicate, however, that some North Vietnamese units have been forced to withdraw in the face of advancing South Vietnamese Marine units.

Enemy shelling of Hue continues. The city has been shelled on four separate occasions during the past two days, but casualties and damage have been relatively light. Rocket and mortar fire were directed at two military positions just south of the city, while government strongpoints west of Hue were the targets of more than 1,000 rounds of artillery fire and a follow-up enemy ground probe.

We cannot rule out the possibility that these attacks are the beginning of a serious attempt to overrun Hue's western defenses, but we think it is more likely that they are designed to relieve pressure on Communist forces in Quang Tri.

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SUDAN

President Numayri said last weekend that US aid to the southern provinces has persuaded him to reconsider normalization of ties with Washington. He gave no indication of timing but he will not act before his return in two weeks from a swing through East Africa.

Numayri seems to be mainly concerned with domestic reaction. Deputy Foreign Minister Muhammad told a US official in Khartoum that the question of renewed ties with the US is controversial, that it has not yet been discussed in the cabinet, and that Numayri will no doubt come under heavy criticism from some pro-Egyptian ministers. Numayri is expected to answer his critics by stressing Sudan's desperate need for US economic assistance.

In an effort to balance the move toward the US, Numayri may also propose that relations be restored with the USSR and Iraq. The Egyptians are clearly unhappy with Numayri's latest display of independence and will attempt to dissuade him as they did last December when he seemed on the verge of renewing ties with Washington. Cairo's semi-official newspaper Al Ahram has already blasted Sudan for its anticipated move, and called Yemen's (Sana) renewal of ties with the US a sell-out of the Arab cause.

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NOTE

China: The anniversary of the party's founding on 1 July passed without publication of the joint editorial that is customary on major holidays. No special events were held, although there was a large leadership gathering at an activity not related to the holiday. This turnout evidently was intended to reassure the populace of the regime's stability despite its persistent failure to observe important events in the traditional way. The muted celebration, particularly the lack of a joint editorial, suggests that the recent month-long leadership conference in Peking failed to resolve the political tensions within the top leadership.

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